fibres are so attached and arranged as to form a layer of membrane which, in a quiescent state, is saucer-shaped.

The fibres composing the circular, are smaller than those of the radiate lamina, being from 6000 to 10000 parts of an inch in breadth.

The facts that appear to be adverse to the idea of the fibres of either layer being muscular are:—

1st. The absence of distinct nuclei in the fibres.

2nd. Their great denseness and hardness.

It is next shown that the four laminæ forming the membrana tympani are continuous with other structures, of which they appear to be mere modifications, and that not one is proper to the organ.

The tensor tympani ligament, which had not been previously noticed by anatomists, is particularly described; it is attached externally to the malleus, close to the insertion of the tensor tympani muscle, and internally to the cochleariform process.

The latter part of the paper is occupied by observations on the functions of the fibrous laminæ and of the tensor ligament of the membrana tympani; and it is shewn that by these two antagonistic forces, the one tending to draw the membrana tympani inwards, the other outwards, this organ is maintained in a state of moderate tension, and is always in a condition to receive ordinary sonorous undulations.

THOUGHTS ON PASSING EVENTS.

By AMBIDEXTER.

OUR ASSOCIATION.

Certain recent "checks" in the Medical Reform chase have tended greatly to develop the importance of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, for although the weight of our two thousand members cannot be said to have stayed the hand of the Secretary of State, yet, it is evident, the judicious Minister will prepare no measure which shall be distasteful to a body of men so large and influential.

The consideration of this severe impediment in the path of the Reformers—this barrier of common sense before the eyes of Government, has led us into a more critical analysis of the laws of our organization, than a cursory glance at the objects to which the attention of the members of the Association is commonly directed, would shew. That there is a hidden keystone, as it were, to the arch which supports our order is certain, for it is scarcely conceivable that so large a number of men, *in actual practice*, precluded by their calling, from frequent personal communication, possessed of all shades of political, religious, and medical opinion, and dragged by their destiny to mortal combat with disease in every variety of class and temperament, from the patrician hall and cathedral cloister, down to the union house and hovel on the heath, should continue of one mind in a confederacy, the chief good of which is a secret to the superficial observer, and a blank to the thoughtless, unless some latent power were at work to bend such motley spirits to one will.

Lawyers of all denominations are seen to meet and unite themselves into one body by the force of their common secular interests. The clergy have one head, one faith, and a singleness of purpose before them. Soldiers and sailors are in themselves a clan. The doctors alone are divided. The immediate advantages of universal co-operation to their professional—*i. e.*, worldly—advancement are difficult to be seen, and therefore, "everyone for himself" is the earliest oracle in practice. Yet a band of two thousand brothers, without actually separating themselves from the rest, have tacitly agreed to act on a set of given principles, which, viewed from without, have no worldly attractions to recommend them, and are no test of their individual success either in science or fortune. What, then, is the cement which for nearly twenty years has kept together this structure, and is daily adding to its strength? We proceed to address ourselves to the solution of this problem, and to endeavour to demonstrate the one element of concord which pervades our social existence.

The common principles which govern good taste, in the highest sense of that word, we believe to be the great power which directs our commonwealth. There is a silent agreement among the members of our Association concerning the treatment proper to be pursued in their dealings with questions of philosophy and ethics; for by a slight effort of the imagination we may recognize a common measure by which controversies which relate to the actions and manners of men are determined among us; and the very duration of our system will serve to shew that this consent is not the result of an arbitrary or casual theory which has been called up by some one master mind, to perish with its author, but is the natural work of certain uniform principles operating on the taste of a refined Society. Moreover, it is probable that the free exercise of these principles, which are the growth of education, could only be found in the provinces of England. The metropolis is a field in which action is chiefly confined to the immediate wants of the people; society is artificial and exclusive, and admits comparatively but few professional men to a participation in its best fruits; whereas, within the last quarter of a century, provincial surgeons have not only been permitted to enjoy, but it may be said, could hardly escape, the advantages of intellectual contact with the educated class of their patients; and this privilege, combined with the general march of improvement, has established a solid groundwork of good taste, which no other state in the profession has had the opportunity, to the same extent, of holding.

Mr. Skey, the late Hunterian orator, has unwittingly called us "an amphibious link between a profession and a trade." Mr. Skey is a wag, and has, we fear, gathered his impressions of the "degeneracy" of the profession from sour grapes. He must come into the provinces to catch the infection of good manners, and see that at least the Provincial Association is actuated by the universal rules which govern gentlemen.

We have said that one common measure is observable among us in settling questions of general interest. The

exponent of that measure is the Journal of the Association; it is therefore to the Journal, as to a centre, that we look for the circulation of those sentiments which, whatever be the degrees of knowledge among us, are the result of an acknowledged sympathy. All who have attentively watched the *tone* of our periodical for the last ten years, must have been struck with the *sobriety of feeling* which has calmly animated the subject matter of our literature. We have entered the lists with no flourish of trumpets, we have built no castles in the air, we have not "harrowed up the soul" of the profession with "spirit-stirring" descriptions of impossible cases, neither have we frittered away our senses in microscopical conjectures on the invisible improbable. Our Editors have endeavoured to teach, with caution, those arts which may do mankind some service. And here let it be remembered, that not only is the *Journal* intended to reflect the judgment and sagacity of the Association in detecting true science, and separating its claims from the sophistry of the mere pretender, but that it is the very mirror of our manners. And perhaps it is not too much to say, that the majority of the members would, if canvassed, be more desirous that their dignity should be represented than their artistic pretensions. Wisdom is a word of large meaning, and derives as much of its essence from the subordinate qualities of the mind—kindness, temper, liberality—as from those of the sublimer kind, which belong more to the intellect. To exhibit our wisdom, then, we have thought it right to deal largely with the former, and to present to the world the written evidence that we possess those virtues which entitle mankind to *respect;* and it may be that we have been zealous to bring these prominently forward, rather than to display those qualities which, according to the metaphysician,* command bare *admiration*.

The ranks of the Association, though honourably open, are not suited to all men; there are gentlemen in the profession as well schooled as ourselves, and possibly of a more lively enthusiasm, who can discern in the sober pages of its periodicals none of that sparkling fancy which has characterized medical journalism in some quarters, and which has become a necessary condiment to their intellectual food, some who, for such reasons, have retired from the Society. We cannot think that our bands have been weakened by secessions of this kind; for, (if we may borrow a figure from the painter's art,) those who do not perceive that all *harmony* of colouring is accomplished by neutral tints, and are, therefore, not of our way of thinking, will find in our Association neither satisfaction for themselves, nor the means of being useful to others.

Lastly, we regard the Association as in itself an essential medical reform, for although its directors have not had the opportunity of regulating the preliminary education of the medical student, which after all is the true basis of all permanent improvement, and is the proper object of the medical corporations, still they have given in themselves an earnest of the good feeling which the whole profession, under suitable management, might share; nor would it be difficult to show, that this advance in civilization has been the result of a better style of education in the profession. That it can be appreciated by the higher councils of the State, is made manifest in the recent elevation of our President, whose temporal honors not only bestow additional grace on the virtues we, his associates, have ever known him to possess, but seem to reflect on us some shadow of the laurels he has so well won for himself.

August 1, 1850.

* Burke.

Hospital Reports.

QUEEN'S HOSPITAL, BIRMINGHAM.

REPORTS OF CASES ADMITTED UNDER DR. DAVID NELSON.

Extracted from the Clinical Reports,

By W. J. MOORE, Esq.. M.R.C.S., and L.A.C., Resident Medical Officer.

[After the perusal of the Report of the Hospital for Consumption, &c., (March, 1850,) especially as regards the mode of treatment, Dr. Nelson would observe, that the general principles maintained, and the results stated therein, are in strong confirmation of the doctrines advanced by him in his Thesis of "Health and Disease," which he publicly defended before the medical faculty of the University of Edinburgh, on his graduation, which he again publicly announced in his Inaugural Lecture in Queen's College, Birmingham, in Michaelmas, 1849, and which are borne out by the cases which were already chronicled in the clinical records of the Queen's Hospital, considerably prior to the publication of this very important document. The differences which may characterize the details of the respective lines of treatment are to be tested by the results. The great basis of Dr. Nelson's distinctive plan is the use of the ferruginated oil, to which combination he attaches much importance, employing the while any remedy in the Materia Medica, from tonics and stimulants, to sedatives or depressants, which existing symptoms may require. The passages above alluded to are to be found in pages 16 and 78 of the Thesis; secondly, in page 16 of the Inaugural Lecture; and thirdly, in the Clinical Records of the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, some of the cases being now made public through the medium of the zealous Resident Surgeon, for the consideration of the profession.]

CASE V.

Case of Sarah Hammond, aged 12, temp. nervous; affected with phthisis, terminating in recovery pro. tem.

JUNE 8th.—*History.*—Sarah Hammond, a pale, thin, weakly girl, of twelve years old, was brought by her father, a pale delicate-looking man, to the Queen's Hospital for advice. She had been for some time troubled with a severe dry cough, which distressed her by day, and prevented her sleeping at night. She had